

# Russians are ready, Americans are not

*Edward Teller, 74, is known as the principal architect of the hydrogen bomb. Teller, who studied with Niels Bohr, worked on the Manhattan Project in 1949 at the Los Alamos Laboratory, which developed the atomic bomb. He co-authored The Constructive Uses of Nuclear Explosives. Teller was interviewed by USA TODAY's Wallace Terry.*

**USA TODAY:** Do you really think mankind is stupid enough to start a nuclear war?

**TELLER:** There is nothing in the world that is as clever or as stupid as people.

**USA TODAY:** Why do you believe the Russians would win a nuclear war if one occurred today?

**TELLER:** Because they are prepared, and we are not.

**USA TODAY:** How do we stop other nations from developing nuclear weapons? Isn't the world becoming more dangerous with that kind of proliferation?

**TELLER:** I have tried to emphasize that the best way to avoid war and create peace is not by control of the instruments of war, but by the control of the cause of war.

**USA TODAY:** What is your basic objection to the bilateral freeze approach to arms control?

**TELLER:** It makes no sense. It talks about a purely imaginary situation. It makes just as much sense as praying for rain.

**USA TODAY:** Do you think the public can and should effectively participate in the nuclear arms debate?

**TELLER:** The public should participate in every important debate. But the public should also be informed. As long as the information is not available under the rules of secrecy, participation by the public will do much more harm than good.

**USA TODAY:** With enough nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal alone to destroy the

world, why do you advocate a stronger arsenal to protect us against the Russians?

**TELLER:** You say there are enough weapons in our arsenal to destroy the world? That is a myth. I am advocating more defensive nuclear weapons. And defensive nuclear weapons so far, practically, do not even exist in our arsenal. The distinction between weapons of destruction and weapons for defense, between weapons of crude power and weapons that are sophisticated — this is an exceedingly important distinction we should make.

**USA TODAY:** If we have more nuclear weapons and greater accuracy in delivering them than the Russians do, then why aren't we in better shape than they are?

**TELLER:** I don't know that we are better able to deliver.

**USA TODAY:** You have spoken of a new secret weapon in early stages of development which can prevent a successful Soviet attack. Doesn't that kind of development simply encourage the Russians to scramble for more weapons?

**TELLER:** I have spoken of several new defensive weapons, which can prevent a Soviet attack. It might encourage more Russians development. And they may even succeed in countering ours, provided they spend 10 times as much on offensive weapons as we are spending on defensive weapons. But they won't be able to afford to do that.

**USA TODAY:** You have urged the CIA to release information about Soviet civil defense systems. If it did, what would we learn, what **TELLER...** Pg. 6-F

## TIMELINE: Nuclear weapons

**1939** — President Roosevelt was told by Albert Einstein and other scientists an atom bomb could be built.  
**1941** — Office of Scientific Research and Development assumed coordination of atomic weaponry development.  
**1942** — A-bomb work was assigned to Manhattan Project.  
**1945** — First atomic bomb was tested at Alamogordo, N.M.  
**1945** — Atomic bomb destroyed four miles of Hiroshima, Japan, and killed or injured more than 160,000 people.  
**1949** — U.S.S.R. tested its first atomic weapon.  
**1952** — U.S. exploded its first hydrogen bomb.  
**1953** — U.S.S.R. exploded its first hydrogen bomb.  
**1963** — U.S., U.S.S.R. and United Kingdom signed partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, banning nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water.  
**1970** — Forty-three nations signed the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty, agreeing not to assist any non-nuclear states to obtain nuclear weapons.  
**1972** — U.S., U.S.S.R. signed ABM treaty, limiting each nation to two anti-ballistic missile systems, and SALT I, restricting for five years the numbers of offensive weapons each could possess to those then under construction or deployed.  
**1979** — U.S., U.S.S.R. signed SALT II treaty, containing new weapons limits, which has not been ratified by U.S. Senate.  
**1982** — President Reagan proposed substituting strategic arms reduction talks (START) for SALT II, which he opposes.

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## U.S. duo campaigns in Asia for defense, anti-drug goals

### Special for USA TODAY

A couple of top U.S. Cabinet members spent election day Tuesday campaigning in Asia — for U.S. defense needs and the war on drugs.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger was wined and dined in Bangkok, where Thai Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda said the United States was Thailand's "staunchest and most dependable ally."

Weinberger promptly announced a \$12 million increase in U.S. credits for Thai military purchases, bringing U.S. military aid this year to more than \$93 million. He also condemned the occupation of most of Cambodia by Soviet-backed Vietnamese troops — the reason why Thailand needs all the help.

Weinberger's next stop on his Asian and Pacific tour is Indonesia, another anti-Communist government looking for more U.S. military aid.

Weinberger arrived in Bangkok on the heels of Attorney General William French Smith, who sought cooperation in halting drug traffic out of the region's Golden Triangle.

By Tuesday Smith was in the Golden Crescent, another center of the drug trade, visiting the teeming bazaar of Landi Kotal, a Pakistani village in the Khyber pass. He walked past stalls famed for dealing in hashish, opium and heroin but paused long enough only to glimpse displays of guns, crockery, watches and soap.

He was discouraged from seeing the drug dens by a local official who sheepishly explained, "I'm sorry but we can't guarantee your safety."

Smith must have already known that — during his visit he wore a flak jacket under his rain coat.

TELLER...

Continued

would we do as a result?

TELLER: We would understand why the Soviets have spent more than \$1 billion every year on civil defense, and why the Soviet people are safer than the American people. We should be able to evacuate our cities when we see that the Soviets have started to evacuate theirs. I don't believe the Soviets will dare attack us without evacuating part of their population. But we have a strong economy. We certainly have many more cars. If we are organized, then we can start the evacuation later and finish it earlier than the Soviets. If we don't have this system of counter evacuation, then the Soviets may evacuate and attack. If we do have it, the Soviets will not try.

USA TODAY: If, as you say, the cobalt bomb is a figment of the imagination, can there be a weapon more powerful than the H-bomb?

TELLER: The cobalt bomb is not supposed to be more powerful. It is designed to increase the radiation hazard — not for a military purpose, but for the specific purpose of maximum, lasting death. In its very conception, the cobalt bomb is an absurdity. Only people who are trying to make nuclear weapons appear absurd even talk about the cobalt bomb.

USA TODAY: How do you make a nuclear war safe?

TELLER: By avoiding it. And I avoid it partly by agreeing with the pastoral letter not to start it, and partly by urging the kind of defenses which will dissuade the Soviets from starting it.

USA TODAY: The anti-nuclear lobby always dwells on the enormous destruction that nuclear war would mean, beyond the impact of the explosions.

TELLER: That is an exaggeration of a terrible damage. They paint pictures of the end of the human race, or even the

end of life on Earth. Now there is something in most grownups that makes us listen to horror stories. Many of the old fairy tales bear witness to that. The horror movies do. It is to these instincts that the anti-nuclear crowd caters. I don't think it is realistic to frighten Americans away from war.

USA TODAY: But they say that life would be unbearable after a nuclear war. Could you live in such a world?

TELLER: One of the basic laws of life is that it wants to continue. You and I have the choice of ending our lives, and we don't. Everybody has gone through periods of despair and survived. If the Soviets were to win, I may not want to live. But I prefer to think that even under those circumstances, I would like to find a way to stay alive and work for the future.

USA TODAY: What is your idea of a safe world?

TELLER: I know how an unsafe world looks, because I am from a part of Europe caught between the Nazis and the Communists. For me a safe world, relatively speaking, is the United States. But anything like absolute safety does not exist. I cannot imagine it.

USA TODAY: When the first bomb was tested, Robert Oppenheimer recalled that a few people laughed, a few cried, most were silent. How did you react?

TELLER: I was impressed.

USA TODAY: In Oppenheimer's mind there floated these words from the Bhagavad-Gita in which Krishna says, "I am become death, the shatterer of worlds." Do you consider yourself one of the creators of our destroyer?

TELLER: Robert Oppenheimer and I were certainly very different kinds of people.

USA TODAY: In 1954, you opposed granting Oppenheimer security clearance during a hearing before the Atomic Energy Commission. That caused him great damage and you great hurt be-

cause many of your colleagues shunned you. Later you supported his nomination for the Fermi Award, but he didn't recover his full reputation before his death. Should more be done to restore it?

TELLER: Oppenheimer did a wonderful job as director of Los Alamos, a job which I have never seen equaled. What he did after the war, I disagreed with. It is far beyond my understanding why he would have done such things. He was so complicated as a person that I did not understand him. And where I cannot understand, I have to stop talking.

USA TODAY: Have you fully recovered from the controversy, physically and mentally?

TELLER: Whether I have recovered, I don't know. And it doesn't matter. I believe the United States has not recovered. The Oppenheimer case introduced a deep division among scientists: the majority which will not work on military problems, and the minority — to which I belong — who do.

USA TODAY: Why do you object to being called the father of the H-bomb?

TELLER: I don't care what I am called. But the H-bomb has never sent me a Father's Day card. To mix biological metaphors with the serious questions of war and peace is not only inappropriate, but in horribly bad taste.

USA TODAY: Dr. Teller, here are two last questions.

TELLER: I am objecting to two last questions. There seems to be a problem there in mathematics and logic.

USA TODAY: Agreed. What would you like to be remembered for?

TELLER: I am not interested in being remembered.

USA TODAY: This is the last, last question. What would you insert into a capsule to be sent into space so that life elsewhere could understand our civilization? A book? A work of art? A piece of music?

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## Egypt's Leader Says He Seeks to Resolve Strains With Israelis

Special to The New York Times

CAIRO, Nov. 2 — President Hosni Mubarak expressed his willingness today to meet with Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel to resolve the strain in relations since Israel invaded Lebanon June 6.

However, he said that before such a meeting could take place, a basis for negotiations would have to be laid. Mr. Mubarak was referring to President Reagan's Middle East peace plan, which calls for autonomy for the 1.3 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in conjunction with Jordan. Israel has staunchly rejected the plan.

On another matter, Mr. Mubarak, emerging from a meeting with his advisers, appeared confident that the border dispute over Taba in Sinai would be resolved.

On Monday, Israel defied Egyptian protests and opened a luxury hotel in Taba, an area claimed by both Israel and Egypt.

He said the settlement of the issue would be a "good sign" on the road to restoring negotiations over Palestinian autonomy.

He said Egypt had offered to buy the 10-story Avia Sonesta Hotel. "Let Israel do as she likes, build the hotel and open it. We are going to pay for it afterward and take it from them."

President Mubarak said the United States is not in favor of the Israeli actions at Taba and that the United States is prepared to take an active role in the negotiations.

An invention?

TELLER: I will give you an answer I haven't given you yet: I don't know. You are asking me how to talk to some entity, which might possibly exist, which probably exists, but of which I don't have the slightest conception. You are talking of things of which science fiction is made. As a very young man I played with the idea of writing science fiction. I found that science is so much more interesting than fiction. Rather than thinking about your space capsule, I'd rather think about the real problems of science and other fields. And that doesn't leave me any free time at all.